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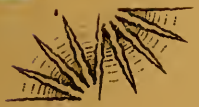

# Mother Goose's Protest.

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Jane Campbell.

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# Mother Goose's Protest.

At a meeting of the New Century Club, of Philadelphia, held one afternoon in April, the subject of discussion happened to be "Books That Have Helped Me." George Eliot and Miss Phelps, Humboldt and Dante, Macaulay and Mark Twain, De Quincy and Emerson, and numerous others received their due meed of praise. Even Comly's Spelling Book and the old-fashioned "Penny Books" were not forgotten, but the paramount claims of "Mother Goose" were completely ignored. One of the members of the Club, therefore, wrote the following "Protest" in her behalf.

JANE CAMPBELL.

# Mother Goose's Protest.

* * * * *

ONE afternoon in the early spring
As I chanced to be upon the wing,
And rapidly onward journeying
O'er tracts of lands and wastes of seas,
It happed some idly blowing breeze,
Or chance, or fate, or what you please,
Brought me to the Quaker City,
On the very day, when the Century Club
Had met together, its wits to rub
Against each other, and thus elicit
Some "spark divine." Well timed my visit!
For so much was said,
And so much was read,
That I very much doubt, if I have ever
Before heard anything half so clever
Or learned too, and witty.

* * * * * * * * *

Indeed your uninvited guest
Entered into it all with zest,
Laughed and applauded with the rest
The merry tale, the playful jest,
And willingly accorded too,
Much praise, whene'er much praise was due;
Admired in turn each worthy, who
Had helped you clever women, do
So much that was both good and new.

Now, I must own
Not quite unknown
Am I to fame. Years since my name
A mighty "household word" became.
I'll also add,
I'm rather glad,
Like other folks, when I have had
My just appreciation.
And so, that April afternoon
I sat and waited, thinking, soon
I'll hear how very great a boon
It is, I've given to mankind.
They're full of gratitude, I'll find.
And so I waited, not averse

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To hear the Century Club rehearse
To me, their obligation.

But the hours slipped by, and never a word
Not even once, was my name heard.
Though they talked of this one and talked of that,
Oh! I tell you the names came out very pat.
There wasn't a single dissenting voice, nor a veto
To one member's being helped by George Eliot's
"Tito."

Nor again, when another member would have us,
Believe she was aided by Miss Phelp's "Avice,"
I didn't object, though I own 'twas amazing
To me, to hear "Humboldt" receive so much praising.
But I wasn't displeased, I just thought if he
Wins such admiration, how much they'll give me!
And I let "Butler" pass, and still sat there gayly,
Though I own for a moment I goggled at "Paley"
And even could smile, as next came the thought up
Of a poor little girl, on a "spelling book" brought up.
And agree with the member, who made a few cursory
Remarks on Miss Alcott's "Loves of the Nursery."
And clapped and applauded most vigorously, since he
Was favored by some—opium eating "De Quincy,"

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And even for Thomas-a-Kempis and Dante
And Marcus Aurelius, my praise was not scanty.
Polite to the end, though the subject now roams
To "Macaulay," the "Penny Books," "Mark Twain"
and "Holmes,"
And "Emerson" too, not once did I flout them,
Though I can't be expected to know much about them,
The most of them lived so long after my day;
Though I haven't the ghost of a doubt, but that they
Are indebted to me, in almost every way
That an author can be. But be that as it may
I'll not press the point. 'Praps some names I forget,
For in my time there was no Professor Loisette
To come and undo civilization's dire ravages
And train us, until we'd the memories of savages.

I still sat serene. Sure my time must soon come,
And I hastily gathered and conjured up some
Few fitting phrases, in which to reply,
But I didn't need them, for not once was I
Even mentioned, one and all passed me by,
Though I can imagine no good reason why.
I cannot but own, I was deeply chagrined,
Here was I, who'd for nearly two centuries queened

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It and ruled—I could almost have cried—
Completely forgotten and pushed to one side.

Oh! Thankless Ones! Was it not I
In thrilling tale of Christmas pie
Devoured in quiet corner,
The great, the important lesson taught,
That simple acts like that, are fraught
With this great truth—that there is naught
That is of worth, but must be sought.
And if you want success to come,
Put in your thumb, to find the plum,
Like that dear child Jack Horner?

And Thankless Ones. It is to me
What you first learned of Botany
You surely owe.
Did I not show
How in a row
In well conducted gardens, grow
Silver bells and cockle shells?
And who is it but me, who tells
Of all the strange, life healing spells
In bramble bushes? My heart swells
With just pride, when I call to mind

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My benefactions to mankind.
For where I ask you, can you find
So safe, so sure,
So swift a cure
This giving eyesight to the blind?
But Hahnneman it is, who's famed
And he it is, who's always named
As first discoverer of the truth
That "Like cures like," when he, forsooth,
Was still unborn, unheard of, when
I first announced to suffering men—
If brambles put your eyes out, then
The same will put them in again.

And then again, you can't deny,
The fact, a moral teacher, I.
Has it not always been my cry
From uncongenial marriage, fly.
Else, be like that
Poor man, Jack Sprat,
Who couldn't, or wouldn't eat up all the fat,
And his lean hating wife,
Who spent all her life
In such turmoil and strife,

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That between them it always was war to the knife.
Yet here, I inculcate the law,
That good from evil we can draw—
Though things were bad they were not at their worst,
Jack Sprat and his wife, were not wholly accursed,
They were thrifty and cleanly, for is it not seen
They managed to keep their one platter quite clean?

And then in Natural History, too,
I taught you all that first you knew.
How sheep are always getting lost;
How dogs upon cow's horns are tossed;
That blind mice always have cut tails;
That people fish for whales in pails;
The way cats go to London town;
How in a quarrel for the crown
The lion whips the unicorn:
And that a black sheep has, when shorn,
Just three bags full of curly wool.
And then my pages too, are full
Of recipes of use to cooks.
Anticipating "cooking books."
I tell you that just twenty-four
Blackbirds go in a pie, no more.

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And show how that great rarity,
A barley pudding boiled, must be
Enriched with lumps of fat, and plums,
Each one as big as my two thumbs.

And then to me
Young piety
Is due, for can you doubt
That it was I, who pointed out,
That all wicked men who wouldn't say their prayers,
Were seized by their left legs and straightway
thrown down stairs?
Again, Ungrateful Ones. I know
The sciences to me you owe.
Was it not I, who was the first
To set your youthful minds athirst
To study your geography?
So that you too, could go and see
The Queen in famous London town,
And London Bridge, while falling down.

Can any one assert that I
In history, was ever dry?
Have children not been known to cry
Ere Mrs. Winslow lived, for my

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True stories of the olden times,
Told in the most soul stirring rhymes?
When good King Arthur ruled this land.
How old King Cole had a fiddling band;
Of Doctor Foster and his trip to Gloster;
And the woman who had a cow and lost her;
Of the King of France, who with his men,
Marched up steep hills and down again.

And again Hygiene, I always taught,
And told all mothers that they ought
To give their babies fresh, pure air,
And so that they could have and to spare,
Explained the best place that a cradle could be
Was perched on the very top bough of a tree.
And I showed how pride goes before a fall,
Like poor Humpty Dumpty upon his wall.

Did I not too, astronomize?
And tell in the most pleasant guise
About the clever dame that flies
To sweep the cobwebs from the skies?
And again, how the lofty minded cow
Jumped over the moon, I told, and how
Robin and Richard, lying abed

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Till ten, found then
The sun was nearly overhead?
Was it not I, that problem solved
Which men have in their minds revolved
And pondered o'er? Is that strange spot,
The moon, inhabited or not?
Did I not show that it must be,
Since I'd recorded carefully,
That the man in the moon, came down too soon;
And, rather incidentally,
Showed, like ourselves, that man must be
Devoured by curiosity,
For to ask the way to Norwich, came he.
Which shows in the moon, that there's no dearth
Of speculation about the earth.

But why thus go on? The case is quite clear
No more am I fondly regarded here,
All my usefulness seems ended.
And the member who at an early age,
Had carefully covered full many a page,
On the "Great Injustice that is done
To Old Maids," would my gratitude have won,
If she only had written thus feelingly

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Of the great injustice done to me.

I often have heard
It gravely averred,
Though before this I thought it was rather absurd,
That "Republics are always ungrateful," but now
I admit it is true, for otherwise how
Can this treatment of me be defended?
Indeed there's no use
To give any excuse
But that for forgetting poor old Mother Goose.

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